

Charitable choice is not a new idea, and over the past several years, Democrats and Republicans alike have voted for charitable choice in the Welfare Reform Act, the community services block grant law, and two substance abuse laws under the public health services act. The Community Solutions Act of 2001 represents a logical extension of these laws and would expand charitable choice to juvenile justice programs, housing programs, employment and training programs, child abuse, and violence prevention programs, hunger relief activities, high school equivalency and adult education programs, after-school programs and programs under the Older Americans Act, as well as many more.

□ 1115

For those who might be concerned about the excessive entanglement of religion in H.R. 7, it prohibits faith-based organizations from discriminating against participants on the basis of religion, a religious belief, or a refusal to hold a religious belief.

Other safeguards include a prohibition on using government funds for religious worship, instruction or proselytizing, and a requirement for separate accounting for the government funds.

Finally, if one objects to receiving services from a faith-based provider, alternative providers must be made available.

I think another important part of this legislation is the expansion of charitable deductions to those who do not itemize on their tax returns. One organization in my home State that would benefit from this change in tax law, as well as the charitable choice provisions, is Reach Out Lakota, located in West Chester, Ohio. This group began nearly 8 years ago after a one-time Christmas charity event, and now has expanded into a year-round organization which provides food, clothing, and other social services to about 45 families each month.

It is this kind of organization and this kind of involvement by community and faith-based organizations that I think is truly making a difference in the lives of many Americans. It is this kind of involvement that the Federal Government should be promoting and encouraging, the kind of involvement that H.R. 7 envisions.

I urge my colleagues to support President Bush in his efforts to transform cities and neighborhoods all across the land. I will ask all of my colleagues to vote for the rule and to vote for this most important bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule because it forces Members who have genuine concerns about some very troublesome elements of the bill to raise all those concerns in a single substitute motion.

This rule permits not a single amendment to this bill to be heard on the

floor. We will not be allowed to have clear votes on any of these questions, so the majority can shield from scrutiny the fiscal irresponsibility contained in this bill, the legislative green light in this bill for invidious discrimination, the nullification of State and local antidiscrimination laws contained in this bill.

Their effort to allow the administration to completely rewrite the billions of dollars of social service programs into vouchers, without any legislative investigation into what we are talking about there, without congressional consideration, and allowing religious groups to subject the most vulnerable in our society to religious pressure and proselytizing using Federal dollars.

Why are they so afraid of open and unstrained debate on this bill that makes such radical changes to our laws regarding religious freedom and the provision of social services? Why are they afraid to have clean up or down votes on these various issues? Does it have anything to do with the fear that those radical proposals considered one by one might not pass this body? Does it have anything to do with the fact that they are having trouble holding their own Members in line to vote for legalizing religious discrimination with taxpayer dollars?

This is compassion? This is what the majority thinks of our first freedom? This is what the Republican leadership and the compassionate conservative in the White House think of the merits of this proposal, that they will not permit amendments to be introduced on the floor and considered and voted on?

This House should have the chance to look carefully at each of these issues within this bill separately. We should have the chance to vote on these issues separately. We should have the chance to consider separately the several radical changes this bill would make in the very good and satisfactory way that religious organizations have been competing for and winning and using Federal funds for providing social services for the last 6 or 7 decades.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I also yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) is recognized for 2½ minutes.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, let us cut to the chase here. Opponents say that the Constitution separates church and State. Let us get down to business. But all legislative history clearly states and reflects the fact that the Founders' intent was only to prohibit the establishment of one state-sponsored religion.

The Founders put God on our buildings, the Founders put God on our currency, and the Founders never intended to separate God and the American people.

Think about what is happening in America. We have guns, drugs, murder in our schools, but prayer and God in our schools is actually prohibited by our government, we the people. Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. The Founders are rolling over in their graves.

I say today on the House floor, a nation that denies God is a nation that invites the devil and welcomes massive social problems, and that is exactly what is happening in America. Look around.

I stand here today in strong support of President Bush's initiative. I want to commend the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) for their great leadership in taking America back to the intended course that our Founders had planned for our great Nation, founded on religious liberty.

We have let a few people in America decide what faith means. It is time to change that. This is the place to start. I commend those who are responsible for this great initiative.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Today I rise in strong opposition to this rule and this bill. As one who attended a Catholic school for 8 years, and a person of very deep faith, I believe faith-based organizations do enormous good in our communities, our country, and across the world helping millions of people. They feed the hungry, heal the sick, house the homeless.

Nonprofit religious organizations should be supported with increased funding and technical assistance. That is what charitable choice should do. There is not one cent in this bill to help these organizations in their noble work.

However, providing Federal funding directly to churches, synagogues, and houses of worship, mosques, which this bill does, represents direct government intrusion into matters of faith. Government cannot and government should not interfere with the practice of religion.

This bill subjects houses of worship to government control. Mr. Speaker, the IRS will have a field day. This bill will allow government-sponsored discrimination. It tramples State and local civil rights laws, and allows the use of Federal taxpayer dollars to fund discrimination in employment.

For example, it would allow organizations to refuse to hire Jews, Catholics, African American Baptists, depending on their religious policies and practices of their denomination. It would use taxpayer funds to fund that discrimination.

That is intolerable. Our government cannot turn its back on decades of fighting against discrimination and start funding discrimination. I urge Members to oppose this rule.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to